



January 2020

Division of Developmental Disabilities

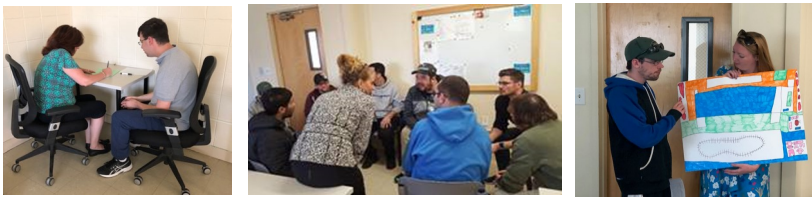
Have you heard about...

...the Job Seekers Club?

The DDD Employment Team has formed a **Job Seekers Club** to assist and get to know any individuals interested in learning more about employment.

No matter where you are in your journey on an employment pathway, please join the Employment Team on the second Wednesday of each month from 12 to 1:30 p.m. The Club meets at 662 Hartford Avenue, Providence (the previous Advocates in Action location) to share information, play games and learn skills related to finding a job.

Please join us for some fun and games and to learn new skills! Bring a lunch and a friend...



Goodbye from Director Rebecca Boss



Hi Folks,

It is with deep fondness that I offer a sincere and grateful farewell to our committed and passionate Developmental Disabilities community.

Providers, individuals, and families alike have always been welcoming and patient with me, even when there have been opposing viewpoints. While there have been times when we have disagreed on issues, I have found you to be nothing short of respectful and gracious. Working with all of you these past three years has demonstrated, in many ways, just what we need more of these days: respectful discourse and kindness while everyone works toward the same goal.

I will miss working with you, but you are in good hands with BHDDH's new Director, Kathryn Power. Some of you may remember her when she previously served as Director, and I couldn't be more pleased that she is holding the position again. Finally, please accept my very best wishes as you continue your work with our committed and passionate DD Division, led by Director Kerri Zanchi.

Wishing you much health and happiness in all your future endeavors,

Becky

DDD Director Kerri Zanchi's Corner



Greetings,

Happy Holidays! As we welcome in the New Year and look forward to our work in 2020, it is important to reflect upon our shared successes in 2019.

With a deep commitment to a person-centered system of services, together we:

- Aligned the DD regulations with these goals and included certification standards for all of our services;
- Launched a Quality Improvement Unit at BHDDH to support onsite quality reviews and technical assistance for our dedicated providers;
- Implemented an electronic case management system to increase our efficiency and processes;
- Launched a rate review to assess our rate structure and to inform alternative payment methods;
- Added \$9.5 million, through a collaborative effort, to the DD rates to increase the wages of our valued Direct Support Professionals.

These are just a few of the key areas that will continue to support our work and our commitment to a system of services that promotes the skills, talents and value of our consumers, their families, our providers and other community stakeholders.

I want let you know how much I appreciate your continued input, support and advocacy to keep moving our system forward. We look forward to continuing our work in the New Year and hearing from you at our community forums.

Again, thank you for your support and feedback. Remember you can always let us know how we are doing at BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov.

Your experiences guide us and your voice matters each and every day!

Kerri



BENEFITS INFORMATION

You CAN work while receiving SSI/SSDI disability benefits

If you receive disability benefits and want to work, program rules known as “work incentives” make it possible. You can learn about work incentives by connecting with your caseworker, reading the guidelines published by the Social Security Administration (SSA), and by attending public information sessions. You can also join the Sherlock Center mailing list to receive timely information.

There are FREE resources for SSA Disability Beneficiaries returning to work

The Social Security Administration encourages you to work to your fullest capability. SSA provides supports that help you seek employment, obtain items necessary for employment, save income, maintain cash and medical benefits for a period of time, and easily access benefits in the future.

Call your Caseworker when you:

- Plan to start or return to work
- Plan to accept or seek a higher-paying job
 - Plan to start your own business
 - Are concerned about stopping work
- Have questions about how work will affect your disability benefits or any other public benefit you receive

The Integrated Community Employment Reporting Form -

found at: <https://tinyurl.com/icereportform>

The Division needs you to report any of these changes:

- new job
- any change in position, hours or wages
- when you leave a job

This form will be also be used to make referrals for Benefits Planning and an Income Disregard. The Income Disregard program allows DHS to disregard part of the income you earn from your job when determining your benefits. Without the income disregard, you may be required to pay a portion of your cost of care.

Disability Benefits Counseling Services are also available to...

...Social Security Disability **beneficiaries** who are working or are actively looking for work.

Social Security Disability beneficiaries include individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Childhood Disability Benefits (CDB), or Disabled Widow(er) Benefits (DWB).

Disability Benefits Counseling Services are free of charge and there is never a cost to the beneficiary for services provided. The Social Security Administration lists **Disability Benefits Counseling providers** on their Ticket to Work website: <https://choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp/>

Enter your zip code to connect with local resources and services. Disability Benefits Counseling Services are provided by Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Projects (WIPA), many Employment Networks (ENs) and many Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) offices. If you cannot find Disability Benefits Counseling Services in your area, contact the Ticket to Work Helpline at 1-866-968-7842 (V)/1-866-833-2967 (TTY).